

Director's Office
Inclusion & Diversity Working Group

Team: Rick Backofen, Kathi Barkigia, Karl Clarke, Espie Fallon, Jaclyn Jones, Melvyn Morris, Nancy Schiulaz, Jean Odin-McCabe, Stasia Scocca

Charge:

- Seek to understand the results of the Culture IQ engagement survey for the I&D dimension.
- Provide observations and recommendations for management action; with the primary focus on actions for the Director's Office, and a secondary focus on institutional/cross-cutting recommendations.

Observations:

Inclusion and diversity are two distinct topics, with different issues to understand and different solutions. However, having an inclusive work environment can facilitate future acceptance of a diverse workforce. Below are the team's observations for both.

Diversity –

- Diversity at BNL is skewed towards certain demographics, with pocket segmentation of certain groups (some minority groups have stronger representation and communities than others). At first glance, this may lead to the feeling that the Lab is a diverse place, however a deeper look reveals that there are segments of diversity but not a true diverse population within all directorates and at all levels of responsibility. The higher one moves through the levels of management the less diverse the population.
- During the hiring process managers prefer to hire people they can relate to or are like themselves – promoting homogeneous staffing and not diversity.
- The lack of diversity of BNL's senior leadership stands out when looking at the organization chart, sending a negative message to staff about the Lab's commitment to diversity.
- The Lab demographics, available on the Inclusion & Diversity Office's website, show that under-represented minorities are better represented at the graduate level than the post-doc and undergraduate levels. The team wondered what contributes to the larger population at the graduate level, and how can the Lab encourage under-represented minorities to stay beyond graduate level. The Lab needs to provide a transparent conduit for career growth, creating opportunities for staff to stay here.

- The growth path through the job classifications is unclear and not transparent. This coupled with the lack of diversity in upper level positions may influence staff from underrepresented backgrounds to look for employment elsewhere.

Inclusion –

- Inclusion issues are felt not only along factors of race/ethnicity, gender, age, and ability; but also, along lines that may be unexpected, such as science/support staff, years of service, and job classification.
- BNL is losing its sense of community. There are not adequate platforms for people to come together to share their culture and community. Some events/programs are not promoted as they used to be. These platforms provide an opportunity for individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, education levels, or departments to come together on an “equal playing field” to cross-talk about their lives, work, successes, and difficulties. Knowing an individual on a personal level can facilitate quicker inclusion and sharing of ideas and knowledge when work life may require unexpected interactions.
 - We recognize that the closure of the Lab’s child care center has been discussed in many forums, however we feel it is important to emphasize that the child care center was more than a daycare, it was an equalizer for staff from all different cultures and fields/positions, helping to build a community and foster relationships across the site.
 - Onsite child care is also a key way to help the demographic of staff that are managing simultaneous work and family responsibilities, especially since career growth and added work responsibilities can often come at a time in a person’s life when they are starting/growing their family.
- Rules/policies, such as flexible work arrangements, are inconsistently implemented. The Lab’s policies and procedures, as stated in HR programs and SBMS, are not consistently “flowed-down” to the line level. This lack of “flow-down” has been referred to as the “clay layer”, which has a negative connotation for middle management. Possible reasons for this may be inconsistent or unclear communication of information and a lack of training.
 - When a program such as flexible work arrangements is crafted and put to paper, the methods of implementation and training are not outlined. Lower level managers are left to their own personal interpretation and implementation. Provide training on how best to promote or facilitate the program/process.
 - Need transparency and better explanations as to why rules are implemented a certain way and seem to apply (or don’t apply) to certain functions/groups.

- Managers need to be more flexible and open minded about flexible work arrangements; a “How can we make it happen” attitude instead of defaulting to “no”/”can’t do”.

Comment Regarding Survey Questions –

The Director’s Office highest and lowest scoring I&D related questions were likely answered from different perspectives – the highest scoring question, “The people I work with are in favor of efforts to promote diversity and inclusion at BNL” was probably answered based on the view of the immediate work group/directorate; meanwhile the lowest scoring question, “People of all backgrounds (e.g., race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, culture, veteran status, age, religion) can succeed at BNL” was likely answered from a Lab-wide perspective and not about our specific ‘directorate’. The responses may also be influenced by the fact that individuals in the Director’s Office may have a broader perspective of the Laboratory than other people (i.e. interfacing with people from all organizations and all levels of the Lab).

Recommendations:

The team recognizes that there is a mix of short-term actions to address immediate issues, as well as longer term strategies.

Director’s Office –

- ❖ Create a Director’s Office Inclusion and Diversity Council. Draw best practices from the other directorate I&D councils.
 - The individual I&D councils should regularly communicate and share/learn from each other.
- ❖ Create a platform/venue to foster the relationships of staff within the Director’s Office and staff offices – this is the foundation to creating an inclusive environment. This platform can be used to discuss Inclusion & Diversity topics or other topics of common interest in an informal setting.
 - Management participation is important but consider using a facilitator instead of management being the lead (I&D Office or external). Facilitation from an outside source will promote a less formal setting and allow management to participate with staff.
 - Consider a “coffee and conversation” approach, but less formal. Perhaps a “round-table” approach rather than a leading panel.

Institutional –

- ❖ Communicate/express Inclusion & Diversity goals consistently throughout ALL levels of BNL, by all levels of management/supervision.
 - Communicate the Lab's Diversity and Inclusion Plan more broadly, as well as, the feedback DOE and others provide on the I&D Plan and Lab I&D report(s).
 - Train and hold supervisors accountable for incorporating I&D into their regular everyday practices, modelling behaviors, holding periodic discussions with their organization, and encouraging staff to participate in I&D activities. This requires extra upper management support when the organization has challenging work demands.
 - Develop BNL best practices that encourage all staff to participate in I&D activities.
 - Consider, where appropriate, providing a project/activity code to capture time spent for I&D activities.
 - Trend I&D activities to publicly congratulate/reward (not necessarily monetary) individuals or groups that model the behavior.
 - Reinforce I&D practices for recruiting, interviewing and candidate selection processes.
 - Develop incentive/award programs providing public recognition of managers and employees for diversity achievements.
 - Utilize Employee Resource Groups (e.g., Hispanic, Asian, African-American groups) as a source of input and feedback for BNL's I&D policies and practices. Promote interaction amongst the Employee Resource Groups to maximize their impact.
- ❖ Provide better training and mentoring for staff moving towards leadership positions.
 - Train managers on how to promote staff.
 - Leadership development training programs: the Early Career Resource Group is one example of a resource to identify Lab talent, train/mentor them, and guide them toward leadership positions.
- ❖ Improve/expand BNL's mentoring program.
 - Identify a senior level sponsor.
 - Identify a champion whose role it is to foster the program, identify opportunities and encourage participation (fully resourced position).
 - Improve communication of leadership's commitment to the program.
 - Improve awareness Lab-wide.

- Incentivize participants.
- Set expectations – it is part of everyone’s job to ‘teach-learn-do’ (every employee is expected to not just perform their specific job tasks, but to always be open to learning new perspectives/techniques, and to share their knowledge/wisdom and guidance with fellow employees).
- ❖ Provide an identifiable, transparent conduit for career growth. The path to promotions and through the job classifications is unclear and not transparent.
- ❖ Work life programs:
 - Provide more opportunities for staff to integrate around some commonality – build a better sense of community among staff through activities/events/programs (ERGs, BERA, ‘pop-up’ events) providing staff the opportunity to interact independent of their position/role at the Lab; opening channels of communication, learning and sharing, and mutual respect.
 - Improve the new hire orientation and on-boarding process, provide new staff with an ‘integration partner’ to help them acclimate to BNL, and follow-up with new staff to see how they are adjusting.
 - Clarify the flexible work arrangement rules for various types of groups/staff.
 - Educate managers on how to manage staff that work flexible arrangements – provide support and understanding to promote the use of flexible work arrangements. This may reduce manager’s apprehensions around this type of work arrangement and open the door for wider adoption.
- ❖ Create more opportunities/mechanisms for cross functional team recognition. Celebrating teamwork and team successes fosters a sense of community that transcends demographic differences.
- ❖ Consider conducting a ‘pulse’ survey to further expand the understanding of the low scores for the question, “People of all backgrounds (e.g., race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, culture, veteran status, age, religion) can succeed at BNL”.
- ❖ Optimize BNL’s Inclusion and Diversity Office, which is currently a small support office.
 - Have this office support the Diversity Council(s) by serving as consultants/SMEs.
 - Have the office train or help to develop training for managers and employees.
 - Have students (undergrads, grads and post-docs) shadow a representative as part of their training/learning about I&D at BNL.
- ❖ Benchmark the programs that other labs and other companies have to attract diverse talent.